

Spencer Coggs



State Senator

Chair and Members,

Thank you for having a hearing on Assembly Bill 102. I am author of the Senate companion bill, SB 94.

AB 102 will license heat and frost installers in Wisconsin to establish and enforce uniform industry standards, and to provide consumers with the assurance of knowing that there are quality regulations that exist for this important profession.

As a former City of Milwaukee Health Inspector, I know the health threat posed by mold and mildew, a common result of improper installation of heat and frost insulation. Aside from mold and mildew, improper installation of thermal insulation and fire stop products can result in structural damage, incomplete protection against fire, and failure in heating and air conditioning systems.

The bill would create a 7 voting member Thermal System Insulation and Fire-Stop Council within the Department of Commerce that would establish the standards for the installation and maintenance of thermal system insulation and fire-stop products. The regulations will include the cost of obtaining a license, enforcement provisions for a State Thermal System Insulation and Fire-Stop/Building Inspector position created by this bill, and set education and training guidelines to obtain the license.

The inspector position would serve as a non-voting member of the Council. This position would serve as both a full time building inspector, as well as being a "clearinghouse" to train other Commerce inspectors on the regulations established by this bill and the guidelines that will be recommended by the Council. The cost for this new position will be covered by the fee to obtain a license. It is important to note that this bill does not apply to residential buildings that contain 3 or fewer residential units. In other words, our intention is not to ask that individual homeowners be made to comply with these regulations.

The bill requires 1000 hours of training each year for four years, or successful completion of apprenticeship standards to become a fully licensed thermal system insulation installer. Recognizing that certain trades, such as plumbers, also deal with heat and frost insulation and fire stop products, we have included an exception for "minor repairs" as defined by the Department of Commerce in the rules making process.

There is a technical amendment to the bill that will correct the fiscal years listed for the authorized inspector position.

Our intent with this bill is not to burden installers with regulation, and we feel we have attempted to take that into account while providing standards that will protect the health of the public. We can't afford **not** to establish these standards at the expense of the health of Wisconsin's citizens.

Last session, this bill received a bipartisan vote in the Senate Labor committee and before the full Senate. On Tuesday of this week, SB 94 received another bipartisan vote in the Senate Labor committee and we look forward to its timely passage in the Senate. I look forward to your support of AB 102 and SB 94.

**Comments of Bruce A. Coleman
Concerning AB 102
Before the Assembly Labor Committee
April 16, 2009**

**I am Bruce Coleman, and I have been employed
in the Heat & Frost Insulation Industry since
1975.**

**I want to first of all Thank Representative Sinicki
and Senator Coggs for authoring and introducing
this bill, and its companion bill in the Senate, SB
94. I would also like to Thank You, Chairman
Sinicki, and all of the members of this
committee, for your time and your consideration
today.**

**If you approve and advance this legislation, you
will be approving a very important preventative
measure for the citizens of Wisconsin.**

**This legislation will help to protect their health
and safety by establishing a Training Standard
for the Craftsmen that install Thermal Insulation
material in and around Mechanical Systems in
the buildings throughout our State.**

My work on mold-related issues, related to my trade began in 2004, after I read an article in The Daily Reporter about legislation being crafted by Representative Terese Berceau to potentially license Mold Abatement Workers.

Mold Abatement Workers are the professionals who remove mold after it has formed.

That prompted me to call Representative Berceau and discuss how we could prevent mold from forming in the first place.

In February of 2005, Representative Berceau hosted a Mold Roundtable Discussion here at the Capitol with approximately 40 to 50 professionals participating. It became clear to all of us that day that there was a strong desire to do what we could to work together to eliminate the chance of mold growing in buildings in Wisconsin.

The methods and materials used in the Building Trades have changed dramatically during the last 30 to 40 years.

We now have single mechanical systems, computer-controlled, that serve the dual purpose

of both heating and cooling a building. We now have “Zone” air-conditioning with sophisticated controls and circuitry that allow us to command cool air, where and when we want it. This is accomplished by incorporating water, or some other liquid, into the HVAC system.

Because there is a liquid medium present in the HVAC system, there is always the risk of condensation forming on the piping, the ductwork, and the support systems leading from the HVAC system.

All Mechanical Systems, whether plumbing, heating or air-conditioning, can produce condensation.

Just like a can of cold soda on a warm day will “sweat”, improperly insulated pipes and valves will sweat. Because the majority of the pipes used in mechanical systems are concealed (hidden in the walls or above the ceilings), mold problems develop long before they become apparent.

When mold actually becomes noticeable, many mold spores have already been drawn into the ductwork, and are being distributed throughout

the building, for the building's occupants to inhale.

What do professionally trained Heat and Frost Insulators do to protect people from the risks of being exposed to mold and fungal growth?

Because Heat & Frost Insulators are required to insulate a variety a heating, cooling and refrigeration systems, completing a comprehensive four-year apprenticeship-training program in this trade is essential. Presently, there are many different types of insulation materials being manufactured, specified and applied, and the type of mechanical system being insulated will determine what type of insulation is used.

Most pipe insulation, that is designed to Insulate piping systems, arrives from the manufacturer in pre-formed sections to accurately fit the pipe's diameter, additionally a vapor barrier jacket that is manufacturer applied to the insulation sections, works to prevent water vapor from forming.

Mechanical Insulation is available in many forms; sheets, rolls, block, spray, and sectional lengths. In most applications, mechanical insulation is finish-covered with a variety of metal, usually aluminum or stainless steel, or, Poly-Vinyl Chloride (PVC) jacketing systems, for protection against the elements.

A properly installed Mechanical System Insulation saves energy dollars for the consumer, and a properly insulated Mechanical System actually will pay back the owner, many times the actual cost of the original installation; yet another reason to demand the installers of Mechanical Insulation Systems be trained, and licensed.

Additionally, a properly applied Mechanical Insulation System creates an envelope around the Mechanical System with the material that is applied, and uses the theory of “still air” to insulate the system from the ambient conditions that surround the system and the insulation.

Also, a properly designed and applied Mechanical Insulation System is a continuous system that follows the pipes and ductwork through a building, wherever they go. Properly

applied Mechanical Insulation Systems should not have breaks, or instances of the absence of pipe covering, in a properly insulated system. A continuous mechanical insulation system seal prevents the risk that moisture will develop. This is the reason why the installers of mechanical insulation systems must be properly trained.

All of us working in the Mechanical Insulation Industry respect the fact that since 1913, Wisconsin has licensed plumbers in our state because of the recognition that the citizen's health and safety depend upon the fact that ALL plumbing systems in the state are installed and maintained properly and according to code.

With the knowledge that has been gained during the last 30 years about the risk to Wisconsinite's health if mold develops as a result of improperly installed thermal system insulation around mechanical systems, there needs to be the same kind of Training and Licensing Standard applied to the installers of Mechanical Insulation Systems.

Because Mechanical Insulation Systems, when properly applied, has the effect of eliminating condensation (and the resulting risk of mold) we

**believe Mechanical Systems' Insulators should
be licensed for the health and safety of the
citizens of Wisconsin.**

**Scientists and Industrial Hygienists have stated
on the record that the only thing that need be
present for mold or fungus to grow is, moisture,
and some form of nutrient. Industrial Hygienists
have stated, as an association, that we will most
likely never see a permissible exposure limit
(PEL) for mold spores, like we did for asbestos
fibers.**

**Also, mold spores can lay dormant in a person's
lungs for up to 25 years, with little or no health
trouble appearing, until a malignant tumor or
other life-threatening disease like blastomycosis
develops.**

**Therefore, it will take until 2032, before we
begin to see the health problems related to
exposure to mold spores and fungal growth
resulting from improperly or poorly insulated
mechanical systems that are being insulated
today.**

I have been a Construction Professional since 1975, and I have personally witnessed too many of my close friends suffer painful deaths as the result of exposure to asbestos that they installed during a time in this country when the use of asbestos was taken for granted.

The community that I came from buried seven very fine men who had applied asbestos during their careers; all the while not being told of the dangers inherent in asbestos.

I feel fortunate to live in a state where we have recognized that the state has an important role in helping to protect its citizens' safety and health. In keeping with that legacy, we have a terrific opportunity to further protect Wisconsin's citizens' health and safety by enacting this legislation. Therefore, I ask for your support for AB 102.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer any questions.

***Bruce A. Coleman
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